

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK099
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Name of Service:	Knockainey Community Pre - School
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Address of Service:	Knockainey Community Centre, Knockainey, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V35 RK31
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mairead Ryan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect	
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).	
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable

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Description of service

Based in the rural village of Knockainey, County Limerick, Knockainey Community preschool operates out of the local parish community centre. The service offers a morning sessional service for 18 preschool children (Monday–Friday, 8:45 am – 11:45 am) and an afternoon sessional service for 15 preschool children (Tuesday–Thursday, 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm). The facilities include a well-resourced playroom, a dedicated kitchen area for arts and crafts, and a large hall for active play. Additionally, an enclosed and sheltered space outdoors facilitates children with an outdoor area for year-round fresh air and exploration.

Staffing

The registered provider is the chairperson of the preschool committee. There are 4 staff employed to work at the service.

All staff have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Staff engage regularly in ongoing training and professional development, and a staff member is on duty at all times with first aid training.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

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(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The designated person in charge was available on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise if required.
- (b) There was evidence in the staff attendance records to show that at all times a designated person in charge was available in the premises.
- (2)(a) There were written validated references available in respect of all staff employed at the service.
- (b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source such as previous schools and colleges were provided.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable.
- (4) All staff members had the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. A staff member present had completed the LINC training, a programme designed to enhance the inclusion of all children in Early Learning and Care settings.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

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Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The service operates a morning session from 8.45am to 11.45pm and an afternoon session from 12.00pm to 3.00pm. On the day of the inspection there were 18 preschool children present with 3 staff for the morning session, and 15 preschool children present with 3 staff for the afternoon session. The adult child ratio met the requirements of Regulation 11.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

- (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-
- (a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

The service maintained a healthy eating policy, with parents providing nutritious daily snacks for the children. All perishable lunch items were stored correctly in a refrigerator, while easily accessible water stations ensured drinking water remained accessible at all times. Lunch time was observed as a sociable occasion with staff sitting with children while they dined.

Children had easy and unrestricted access to toilet facilities located conveniently near the main hall and the preschool room. A nappy changing area was also available if required. To ensure comfort, the service provided spare clothing when necessary and rain gear was available for outdoor play.

High hygiene standards were upheld, with tissues and wipes readily available and waste disposed of in foot-pedal operated, lidded bins. The environment encouraged free movement and exploration both indoors and out. The availability of a sheltered outdoor area allowed children to enjoy extended periods of fresh air, regardless of the weather.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

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The service operated across three distinct areas within the community centre, designed to ensure constant adult supervision as children transitioned between spaces.

The main Preschool room was a dedicated space that featured several developmentally appropriate interest areas. Children could explore a construction zone, an imaginative "home corner" with a large dollhouse, and an art and craft area. For quieter moments, a relaxation corner was available, furnished with a book stand, soft floor mat and a large, soft couch.

The main hall was an expansive area well organised with lots of large interest areas developed. The area was utilised for small group activities, large group games and for gross motor play. Children were observed staying active with ride-on toys, slides, plastic hoops, and tunnels.

The Kitchen space focused on creativity. This room contained low-level tables and tuff trays for messy play. Open shelving allowed children to easily access materials for painting, art and craft materials.

For outdoor play the children benefited from a garden and a sheltered area located adjacent to the preschool room, allowing for a seamless "indoor-outdoor" flow. These spaces mirrored the variety of indoor activities, featuring sensory and imaginative play areas. A large sandbox and mud kitchens were available for messy and creative experiences. A large picnic table provided a shared space for adults and children to engage in tabletop tasks or dine together outdoors when weather was favourable.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

The internal and external doors to the premises were secured at all times. Staff inside the main building allowed access to all who entered the facility. Outdoors all areas were enclosed with fencing and children were supervised at all times when playing outside. This prevented any child gaining access to the outside carpark and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children.

All toys and play equipment were assessed and were noted to be in good condition and free from pinch and crush points. All hazardous cleaning agents were stored out of reach of all children.

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Infection Control:

The service was cleaned on a regular basis by the staff and a high standard of operational hygiene was observed in all areas of the building. There were hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels and foot pedal operated lidded bins available in all sanitary accommodations.

Fire Safety:

All fire exits in the building were unobstructed and accessible in the premises. A safe fire assembly area was signposted in the outdoor area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out monthly. The most recent fire drill took place on the 17th of February 2026 for both the morning and the afternoon play group.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed in November 2025.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises indoors and outdoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door ensured all who entered the premises were checked in by an authorised person.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) All areas inside and outside were well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas. The premises was rodent proofed, and a pest control company was contracted to check the facility on a regular basis.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, nappy changing areas and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults present each day. A disability access toilet was available if required.